

POVERTY ALLEVIATION THROUGH QUALITY EDUCATION

Development is the buzzword and so are the words “Inclusive” and “Sustainable”. By Inclusive Development, I mean the growth of all irrespective of their gender, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, disability or poverty. By Sustainable development, I mean evergreen development-development today without compromising the needs of the future generations.

For Sustainable Development to take place, Inclusive Development is essential. Hence I chose this related topic. To me, Development comes through Education as Education alleviates poverty. I preach and practice it too. KIIT and KISS have practiced it.

2018 marks the 150th-anniversary celebration of Mahatma Gandhi, the father of our Nation. He believed in the power of Education in empowering the downtrodden. Freedom is like a dry log of wood if poverty is not alleviated in the country.

Swami Vivekananda, world-renowned social reformer and a thought leader called Education as "Man-Making." He realizes that it is only through education that the uplift of masses is possible. He stated it emphatically that if society is to be reformed, education has to reach everyone-high and low because individuals are the very constituents of society. The sense of dignity rises in man when he becomes conscious of his inner spirit, and that is the very purpose of education.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, economist, social reformer, and architect of one of the largest constitution in the world said: “Education is the panacea of our social troubles.”

All great men, statesman, policymakers, thought leaders have spoken at length about Education and it's tremendous potential to alleviate all social problems. The Sustainable Development Goals of 2030 emphasizes the importance of Quality Education for Hunger and Poverty Alleviation and 5P- People, Planet, Partnership, Peace and Prosperity. MDG' S could not achieve its objectives in the true sense because of its inadequate stress on Education. What has been promoted and advocated today has been practiced by us for the last 26 years.

One live example, one of its kind in the world, the eight wonder as fondly referred to by many, is Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences located in Bhubaneswar, Odisha. It is a home to 27,000 indigenous children who are provided with comprehensive Education from Kindergarten to Post Graduation free of cost besides Skill Development and Sports Empowerment.

What started as a small seed with 125 students in 1992-93 has now grown enormous with 27000 existing students, 12000 alumni and 12000 students in the satellite centers of KISS in 10 districts of Odisha. It has become a revolution today.

Another institute founded by me is Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology. It is one of the most promising Universities providing technical and professional Education in India with 30,000 students from India and 45 countries abroad.

Both these institutions are integrated with a unique model. The stakeholders of KIIT contribute and fund the expenses of KISS. It was set up in 1992-93 when Odisha, my state was backward in terms of Education for general people. Globalization was yet to affect the quaint Odisha. Education for tribal people was a remote dream. They lived in alienation, poverty, Illiteracy and superstition. My state has almost 24 percent indigenous population, 62 Tribes and 13 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups.

The path was not easy. The tribal fear mainstreaming and want to live in nature. Government mechanism exists but the reach is limited. We dared to enter into untouched areas, reaching the unreached to empower them through Education.

Today, KISS is the largest and first exclusive tribal University in the world. It is a successful model to be replicated in other states and countries as it offers a complete solution to a poor child - from Education to Employment to Empowering Communities. Comprehensive and quality Education is the need of the day as Half Education is harmful than no Education.

But the most incredible part is that it was conceived, established and made successful by a man from the same state who has faced acute poverty, ten times more than that students who come to KISS today, lost father at the age of 4, starved for food many nights, sold vegetables and assisted in parboiling of paddy to be sold for meager prices.

The mega Revolution is successful and has been operating for the last 26 years without any flaw. It's the perfect integration of KIIT and KISS, a unique model of Empowerment and the hand of God makes it a Sustainable Development model and example for others to emulate.

- **Prof. Achyuta Samanta**
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